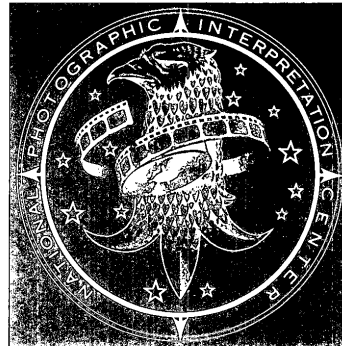


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PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION REPORT



RECENT MILITARY
ACTIVITY IN
MONGOLIA

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JANUARY 1970
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RECENT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MONGOLIA

The extensive buildup of Soviet military forces in Mongolia, which began after 1965 and intensified from 1967 on, continued at a significant rate throughout 1969. By January 1970, two major military airfields, 17 deployment and dispersal airfields, and five major ground force installations, capable of housing at least three divisions, had been identified. Both new construction and expansion of facilities were continuing. The buildup is concentrated in the eastern part of the country, most of it along the Trans-Mongolia railroad and in the Choybalsan area.

Activity at Air Installations

The two major military airfields in Mongolia are at Nalayha and Choybalsan. As of December 1969, each was occupied by a tactical air regiment equipped with Fresco (MIG-17) fighter aircraft. Construction on the airfields had begun in the summer of 1967 and was paralleled by the construction of 17 graded-earth deployment or dispersal airfields apparently intended for contingency use. Two of the latter were no longer operational by the end of December 1969, the one at Sumber Suma having buildings constructed on the runway and the one at Choybalsan South probably having been converted for use as a bombing target.

Major Airfields

Each of the two major airfields has a concrete runway more than 2,600 meters (8,530 feet) long. In addition, each airfield has a parallel concrete taxiway, two end-connecting links, two crossover links, one parking apron, one maintenance apron, and a concrete taxiway to extensive dispersal areas with re-vetted concrete hardstands. Both airfields have full support facilities that include housing for air and ground crews and construction troops, POL storage, and ammunition storage facilities. Electronics aids were being installed in December 1969 to give both airfields all-weather capability.

Deployment or Dispersal Airfields

All the deployment or dispersal airfields are similar in size and configuration, having graded-earth airstrips at least 3,048 meters (10,000 feet) long. Each has a graded-earth parallel taxiway, two end-connecting links, and two crossover links. All are characterized by a lack of full support facilities, though a few have some facilities such as electronic aids or small amounts of POL storage. Several have been kept free of snow during the winter. A few fighter or transport aircraft and helicopters have been sighted occasionally at deployment or dispersal airfields.

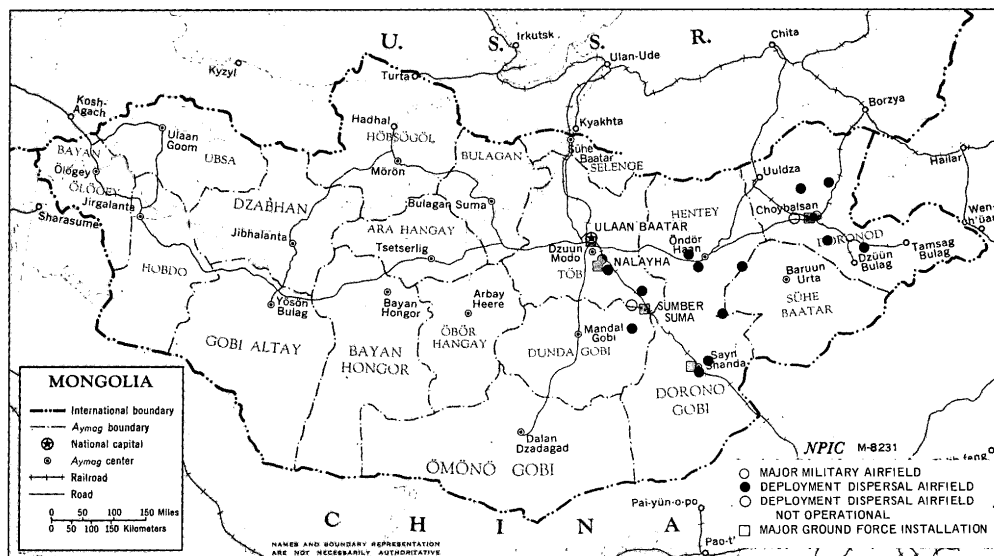


FIGURE 1. MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MONGOLIA DURING PERIOD OF 1966 THROUGH 1969

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Activity at Ground Force Installations

Three areas of military installations, each of division size, have been identified on the Trans-Mongolia railroad at Ulaan Baatar, Sumber Suma, and Sayn Shanda. Extensive military construction at Choybalsan indicates that preparation may be underway for a fourth division-sized unit in this area. The fifth major military installation is at Nalayha, 26 nautical miles (nm) south of Ulaan Baatar. It is in the early stage of construction and apparently is designed to provide logistical support for one or more of the combat divisions. Details on the construction chronology and a description of each of the five installations follow.

Ulaan Baatar

Soviet military activity was first evident in the Ulaan Baatar area in early 1966. Since that time, facilities at the two army barracks in the area have been expanded to the extent that they now include more than 100 major buildings. The current combined order of battle for these two installations exceeds 2,000 vehicles and pieces of equipment. A Soviet motorized rifle division was identified in this area late in 1968. No major changes have occurred during 1969.

Sumber Suma

A military barracks was first observed at Sumber Suma in December 1969 (Mission 1108). The most recent prior clear coverage of this area revealed that construction had not begun in December 1968. Within the year, construction had been rapid: 46 probable barracks and five support buildings had been built, and 76 building foundations were evident (Figure 2). The installation was laid out in three regimental areas (two of which had adjacent motor parks), and it also contained a headquarters area and a support area. Two storage areas were nearby: one double-secured area immediately east of the installation contained four buildings under construction, and the other, 2 nm north, contained ten storage buildings. Two tent camps contained more than 80 tents. More than 600 vehicles and pieces of equipment and 18 anti-aircraft artillery pieces were present in December 1969. However, that photography did not permit identification of vehicles by type; therefore a determination of the type of unit to occupy the installation cannot be made at this time.

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Sayn Shanda

The southernmost Soviet ground force installation in Mongolia is 62 nm north of the Chinese border at Sayn Shanda. Construction on it began in January 1967 [] and Sayn Shanda was first reported active in February 1968 []. A tank battalion was identified there in August 1968 [] indicating that the unit was at full regimental strength. However, by August 1969 the size of a new area under construction indicated that expansion adequate to house a complete Soviet division was underway. The area of new construction consisted of three regimental areas with adjacent motor parks, and numerous tent camps. Although the equipment for an entire division is not yet present, the order of battle has increased steadily. [] in excess of 800 vehicles and pieces of equipment were observed at the installation.

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Choybalsan

Since August 1967, four new military facilities have been constructed in the Choybalsan area and a fifth one was observed under construction in October 1969. The first four to be completed consisted of a regimental size army barracks; a probable headquarters area; a small barracks area; and a barracks and construction camp housing the workers who were constructing new facilities near Choybalsan. This latter barracks appears to have undergone a change of function recently and may now be used solely as an army barracks.

The new large barracks area was first observed under construction 1 nm southeast of Choybalsan in October 1969 [], the latest complete coverage, when two tent camps were observed and 69 buildings were either complete or under construction (seven completed barracks, three buildings under construction, and 59 building foundations). A month later, partial coverage revealed that construction was continuing at a rapid rate. At least 118 buildings were completed or under construction (seven barracks, five other buildings, seven barracks under construction, four support buildings under construction, and 95 building foundations). The size, configuration, and rapidity of construction of this installation in conjunction with the construction of the other facilities in the area indicate that a fourth Soviet division-size unit may be destined for deployment in this area of Mongolia in the near future.

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Nalayha

An installation near Nalayha that appeared to be a small army barracks and storage area when first observed in October 1969 proved to be the early construction stage for a large support base when observed on clear complete photographic coverage []. By that time, a barracks area, at least four major storage areas, and a rail spur to serve

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all areas were observed under construction. It is too early to tell whether the installation is intended to be the primary support base only for the division forces at Ulaan Baatar or whether the facilities will be further expanded to provide support for other combat divisions in Mongolia as well.

The barracks area contained ten barracks, four probable barracks, one administration building, one messhall, two possible vehicle storage buildings, nine support buildings, nine building foundations, and a tent camp with 25 large tents. Another tent camp at the installation contained 55 tents and approximately 20 vehicles or pieces of equipment.

In the northernmost of the four storage areas, a secured POL storage area, approximately 120 large POL tanks were being emplaced in December 1969; three times that number could be accommodated in the area. A general storage area southwest of the barracks area contained nine warehouse-type buildings under construction, 15 warehouse-type building foundations, ten other building foundations, and additional space adequate for at least twice that number of structures. A triple-secured explosives storage area southwest of the general storage area contained 31 revetted explosives storage buildings, four additional building revetments, three building revetments under construction, 11 dispersed probable stacks of supplies, and remaining space within the secured area for twice the number of buildings. Another as yet undefined storage area west of the explosives storage area probably will provide additional general storage, and it will eventually be by far the largest of the four storage areas. It contained six warehouse-type building foundations and five other building foundations in December 1969. The rail spur apparently will terminate within this area.

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